

for America's success, and I am determined to see that we follow it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:28 p.m. on the factory floor. In his remarks, he referred to Bertha Torres, employee, and Sidney Harman, chief executive officer, Harman International Industries. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks on NetDay in Concord, California**

*March 9, 1996*

Thank you so very much. I want to say again how much I appreciate the wonderful welcome we have received here today. I thank your principal, Sheila Walker; Superintendent Allen; your fine Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin; and Lieutenant Governor Davis; my good friend Senator Boxer; and Representative Miller. I want to say again what a good job I thought—I want to join the Vice President—I thought Brian DeGrassi did a good job up here. We didn't even need to speak after he talked.

I want to thank John Gage and Michael Kaufman for originating the idea of NetDay. The country will long be in their debt. They have come up with something truly remarkable. And I want to thank the Merrills and all the wonderful volunteers here. And because of my own past I don't want to leave here without acknowledging your award-winning band and flag team. I thank them for being here as well. Thank you very much.

And I want to thank Vice President Al Gore, who 20 years ago, 20 years ago coined the term information superhighway and is now helping every American child to become a part of it. I thank you for that.

The Vice President and I have looked forward to coming back for this day ever since last September when we came to California and met with leaders of the communications industry. That day we challenged Californians to connect at least 20 percent of your schools to the information superhighway by the end of this school year. You didn't fret about it; you're simply doing it.

Think about it. On this day, March 9th, 20,000 of your fellow citizens are meeting

this challenge. I am honored to be here with you.

Today one out of five California schools will be wired to the future. Within 4 years every school in the State will be wired to the future. We are putting the future at the fingertips of your children, and we are doing it together in the best American tradition.

We are living through a moment of absolutely astonishing transformation; a moment of great possibility. All of you know that the information and technology explosion will offer to you and to the young people of the future more opportunities and challenges than any generation of Americans has ever seen.

Our country is changing just as profoundly as it did when we moved from farm to factory, from the country to the cities and towns 100 years ago. The microchip and the global marketplace are opening up undreamed-of prospects but real challenges. If we want to keep the American dream alive for every single person who is willing to work for it, we know that more than ever before we have to give all Americans the skills, the education they need to be winners in this time of change. We must not send our children into a 21st century unprepared for the world they will inhabit and the jobs they will have to fill.

All of us are here today because we know purely and simply, that every single child must have access to a computer, must understand it, must have access to good software and good teachers and yes, to the Internet, so that every person will have the opportunity to make the most of his or her own life.

I have spent a great deal of the last 3 years trying to open up educational opportunity and help educators and parents raise educational standards in America. There is more that we must do. Of course we need high standards and high expectations. Of course we should open the doors of college education to every single American who needs to go.

That's what the new student loan program is about, which cuts costs and makes repayments easier. That's what the national service program is about, promoting this kind of community service in return for funds to go to college. That's why I believe the most im-

portant tax cut we could give in passing a balanced budget is to give every American family the opportunity to deduct up to \$10,000 a year of the costs of college tuition.

But whatever else we do, we must bring the information and technology revolution to every, every classroom in America. Every child in America sees a computer at work in a grocery store, in a video arcade, many at home. One of the few rooms that you can't enter in America today and know for sure that you will see a computer and to see computer technology is a classroom.

We are changing this today in the same way our Nation has always changed for the better, by working together united as one America. We understand there is no generation gap between old-fashioned American values of hard work, teamwork, and optimism in our forward march into the technological world of the 21st century.

In a way, NetDay is a modern version of an old-fashioned barnraising. Government's not doing this alone, nor is business, nor can schools do it alone. All of us are joining together, students, scientists, business leaders, engineers, parents and old-fashioned American citizens who have no other interests other than a love for their country, a love for their children, and a belief in the future of America. What you are doing today is America at its very best, and it is guaranteeing America's future.

Just think about it. Today in California we are installing 6 million feet, 6 million feet of computer cables and plugs. That's a message that all America will hear tonight and tomorrow and be proud of, and I hope will emulate.

I want to say a special word of thanks, as the Vice President did, to the business leaders all across the State, from Sun Microsystems to AT&T, MCI, Netcom, America Online, the Scholastic Network, Apple, which is donating computers, Netscape, and Microsoft giving free software—we're having trouble with these speakers. Just pretend you hear it even if you don't. *[Laughter]* I want to ask every one of you to stop and give a special applause to every single business in California that is supporting this endeavor today. This is corporate citizenship at its best.

I thank the IBEW and all the labor organizations that are helping today.

There are some truly impressive things being done by students today. In San Diego, one class sold cupcakes to pay for the cost of their NetDay kit. All across the State, teenagers today will be able to teach their parents a thing or two about the Net. In Palo Alto, one school which was wired a short time ago, this NetDay is providing the first time many parents will see their child's classroom. But after the classroom is wired, the parents are painting the classrooms and repairing a decayed building.

I say that to make this point. One of the most probing comments I have seen in reading the press out here in California in preparing to come is that some have said "Well should the President and the Vice President, should the State be emphasizing computers in all the classrooms when some of our school buildings are falling down, some of our play yards in disrepair." My answer to you is yes. If everybody has those skills, our school districts will be wealthier and better. But we do not have to choose; the same volunteers that are wiring the schools can also fix them up. And I hope people will do it all across California.

I also want to thank the teachers that are working today. And what I think is a real picture of what is so special about today, the teachers on strike in Oakland are putting their pickets down and participating in NetDay.

We are trying to do our part. In the telecommunications bill I signed a few weeks ago, thanks to the long efforts of the Vice President and many in the Congress, there is a guarantee that schools and libraries and hospitals will all be able to be hooked up at affordable rates. And last month I announced a \$2 billion technology literacy challenge to help communities all across this country get the right kind of computers in every classroom and every library by the end of the century.

But more than anything else, we need volunteers, trained teachers, good software. That is what we are celebrating today as well. I cannot think of a single endeavor which has involved so many different Americans from so many different walks of life to do

something that is so clearly in the interest of every single American citizen. And again let me say to all of you who are here, thank you. Thank you for the enthusiasm. Thank you for the numbers. Thank you for your commitment.

I want to make just one more point, and I want to emphasize something the Vice President said. The other question which has been raised is whether or not somehow this advance of technology will divide our people more, whether or not the poor children or the poor school districts will be left behind, whether or not this will inevitably give greater advantages to those who already enjoy them. Let me just give you one story that will refute that, I hope, forever.

Last month, I had the opportunity with the Vice President to visit the Christopher Columbus Middle School in Union City, New Jersey. Just a few years ago the schools there were so bad the State was on the verge of taking them over and taking them away from the local school board and the parents. But it was a revitalized community effort, involving Bell Atlantic and all the local citizens we celebrate here in California today, that put computers in every 7th grade classroom and in every student's home in a school district that had a low per capita income where most of the families are first generation immigrant families.

New Jersey is one of the wealthiest States in America, and in a matter of just a couple of years in this far-from-wealthy school district with first generation immigrants, the children have an attendance record, a graduation rate, and most important of all, test scores that are above the State average. Technology is going to liberate Americans and bring them together, not hold them back.

And that's what I want to happen to California. Look at this sea of faces here. You are America's present and America's future. Now the children will not only be able to access the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence, they will be able to, how uncomfortably it might be, follow how Congressman Miller and Senator Boxer vote—[laughter]—and send e-mail to me and the Vice President, telling us what mistake we have made that day.

To the younger people in this audience, I hope you will never forget this day. Someday your children will marvel at the idea that there ever was a classroom without a computer. You can tell them you were a pioneer. Just as our parents and grandparents built our schools and libraries and highways for their children, you will leave your children a legacy of opportunity along the information superhighway.

The 21st century is America's for the taking if we are bold enough and strong enough and confident enough to go forward together. We will make the best of this new technology together. We will educate our children with it, improve our businesses with it, make our Government more democratic with it, and build a brighter, freer, more prosperous future with it. That is the American way.

Let the future begin. Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:04 a.m. at the Ygnacio Valley High School. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Allen, superintendent, Mount Diablo School District; Lt. Gov. Gray Davis of California; John Gage, director, science office, Sun Microsystems; Michael Kaufman, director, information services, KQED; Charlie and Margie Merrill, volunteers; and Brian DeGrassi, student, Ygnacio Valley High School.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*March 9, 1996*

Good morning. Today I want to talk about our economy and about the progress we're making, and how to keep our economy moving forward.

When I ran for President I said we could create 8 million new jobs over the next 4 years if we followed the right strategy, if we followed the strategy of giving all Americans a shot at the American dream by reducing the deficit and investing in the education and training of our people, in the new technologies of the future, in our communities, and in our commitment to open markets with more fair and free trade.